

A shaman is a man who

756 owns a great many magic chants, which he uses for the common good of
[533] his people. He must also be capable of leading a ceremonial dance, of
[781] playing the rattle gourd in the different modes, and of performing the
[429] rites befitting certain circumstances. The main test of his skill is offered
[440] by the harvest dance, which can be successfully organized only by full-
[796] fledged shamans. By his "voices" and jumps, the shaman endeavors to
[781] make his body "light." He must also have frequent dreams, because they
give him superior knowledge and insight into the future.

753 The ancient *Guaraní* and even many modern groups assign disease to
[178] the intrusion of an object into the body. The *Apapocuvu* visualize the
source of the illness as an invisible substance that the shaman sees after
[755] he has chanted for several hours. The treatment's aim is to extract that
substance and to endow the patient with magic power.

756 Legends and historical traditions both attest the extraordinary prestige
785 enjoyed by some shamans of old who were leaders of their tribes. After
[554] receiving their inspiration, these great men retired into the wilderness,
where they lived on celestial food. By constant dancing some *Apapocuvu*-
[774] *Guaraní* shamans gradually subjugated their animal soul, strengthening
their ayvucué, or peaceful soul, until they could fly toward the heavenly
Land-Without-Evil.

178 Among ancient *Guaraní* great medicine men worked miracles by their
756 chants. With their saliva they caused death. They were strong enough
[591] to drag a whole tribe across a large river. They claimed absolute control
[765] of all natural phenomena, including stars. After their death, their bones,
[778] kept as relics in luxurious hammocks hung in special huts, were worshiped
[789] and consulted as oracles. Ordinary shamans added to their prestige by
sleight of hand.

756 Shamans are not only responsible for the religious life, but also inter-
692 fere in the administration of justice. Whenever a succession of misfor-
754 tunes is imputed to witchcraft, the shaman unmask the sorcerer, who is
•[683] savagely killed. The shamans' political power derives, naturally, from
[554] their prestige and from the fear which they inspire. Usually, witchcraft
is blamed on a neighboring tribe. Sorcerers kill their victims by practic-
ing witchcraft on their exuviae.

MYTHOLOGY

773 The high-sounding names of the main characters in the *Apapocuvu*-
Guaraní mythology tinge it with a solemnity quite foreign to the versions
of the same motifs collected elsewhere.

773 The story of the creation is told in impressive terms. At the beginning
776 there was darkness, and the Eternal Bats fought in the night. Our Great
Father found himself and created the earth, which he propped on the
Eternal Cross. With him was a companion, Our-Father-Who-Knows-
Everything. Our Great Father made a woman, Our Mother, whom he